

## The Civics Assessment

The NAEP civics assessment encompasses three interrelated components: civics knowledge, intellectual and participatory skills, and civic dispositions. The knowledge component of the assessment is expressed in five fundamental questions:

- What are civic life, politics, and government?
- What are the foundations of the American political system?
- How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy?
- What is the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs?
- What are the roles of citizens in American democracy?

The NAEP civics assessment is also designed to measure the intellectual and participatory skills students need to face the challenges of public life in a constitutional democracy. Central among these are the abilities to describe, explain, and analyze information and arguments, and to evaluate, take, and defend positions on public issues. The third area of the assessment, civic dispositions and participatory skills, refers to the rights and responsibilities of citizens as members of society.

The assessment is made up of multiple-choice, short constructed-response, and extended constructed-response questions. The constructed-response questions make up approximately 40 percent of the assessment time. For more information regarding the civics assessment framework please visit <http://nagb.org>.

### ***NAEP Civics Framework Distribution of Questions Pool Across Areas of Civic Knowledge***

<b>Grade</b>	Civic life, politics, and government	Foundations of the American political system	The Constitution and the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy	Relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs	Roles of citizens in American democracy
4	25%	20%	15%	10%	30%

## The U.S. History Assessment

The assessment is organized around three concepts or dimensions: major themes of U.S. history, chronological periods of U.S. history, and ways of knowing and thinking about U.S. history. The themes and periods of U.S. history function as a matrix, with the assessment addressing the role of the themes across the periods.

### ***Distribution of Question Pool Across Historical Themes***

Grade	Themes			
	Change & Continuity in American Democracy	Gathering & Interactions of Peoples, Cultures, & Ideas	Economic & Technological Changes & Their Relation to Society, Ideas, & the Environment	Changing Role of America in the World
4	25%	35%	25%	15%

Eight chronological periods that overlap and vary in depth of coverage are included in the assessment:

- Beginnings to 1607;
- Colonization, settlement, and communities (1607 to 1763);
- The Revolution and the new nation (1763 to 1815);
- Expansion and reform (1801 to 1861);
- Crisis of the Union: Civil War and Reconstruction (1850 to 1877);
- The development of modern America (1865 to 1920);
- Modern America and the World Wars (1914 to 1945);
- Contemporary America (1945 to present).

Questions include multiple-choice, short constructed-response, and extended constructed-response formats. Constructed-response questions make up approximately 50% of the assessment. The cognitive dimension of historical thinking is measured by the inclusion of test questions divided between those measuring historical knowledge and perspective (40%) and those measuring historical analysis and interpretation (60%). Many questions in the assessment are based on visual or textual stimuli. For more information regarding the U.S. history assessment framework please visit <http://nagb.org>.

## Civics and U.S. History Booklet Directions

In each of the next two sections, you will have 25 minutes to answer a series of questions about history or civics. You should think carefully about your answers, and you should use the entire 25 minutes to complete each section.

You will be asked to respond to several different types of questions. Some of the questions will require you to choose the best answer and fill in the oval for that answer in your booklet.

For other questions, you will be asked to write short answers on the blank lines provided in your booklet. Here is an example of a question that requires you to provide a short answer.

### Example 1

Who was Thomas Jefferson and why was he important? Try to identify two reasons.

*Jefferson was the third U.S. President. He was the main writer of the Declaration of Independence and he bought the Louisiana territory from France.*

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Also, you will be asked to answer other questions by writing longer, more detailed responses on a full page of blank lines. For example, here is a question that requires you to provide a longer answer.

Example 2

Explain three reasons why the early English settlers of New England left home to journey to North America.

The early English settlers left home for three reasons. Many of them wanted religious freedom because the King would not let them practice their faiths. Some were looking for more land or a way to make a better living because they were poor or hadn't inherited any land. Others hoped to set up a whole new society better than the one they left behind.

When you are asked to write your response be sure that your handwriting is clear. Think carefully about each question and make your answers as complete as possible, using as many lines as you need.

Finally, in some questions you may be asked to draw maps, graphs, charts, tables, or timelines.

If you finish before time is called, be sure to read your work again and change anything that you think will make your answers better.



## Sample Civics Questions

### Grade 4

Questions 1–4. Here is a list of jobs. For each one, decide if the job is something local governments do for people. After each job, fill in the oval under “Yes” or “No.”

	YES, local governments do this job for people.	NO, local governments do not do this job for people.
1. Running restaurants	<input type="radio"/> A	<input checked="" type="radio"/> B
2. Cleaning a family’s house	<input type="radio"/> A	<input checked="" type="radio"/> B
3. Taking care of parks	<input checked="" type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B
4. Cleaning streets	<input checked="" type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B
5. The President of the United States is elected for a term of <input type="radio"/> A 2 years <input checked="" type="radio"/> B 4 years <input type="radio"/> C 6 years <input type="radio"/> D 8 years		7. The first ten amendments to the United States Constitution are called the <input type="radio"/> A Preamble <input checked="" type="radio"/> B Bill of Rights <input type="radio"/> C Articles of Confederation <input type="radio"/> D Separation of Powers
6. People in the United States elect their government officials by <input type="radio"/> A Public surveys <input type="radio"/> B Television newscasts <input type="radio"/> C Telegrams <input checked="" type="radio"/> D Secret ballots		



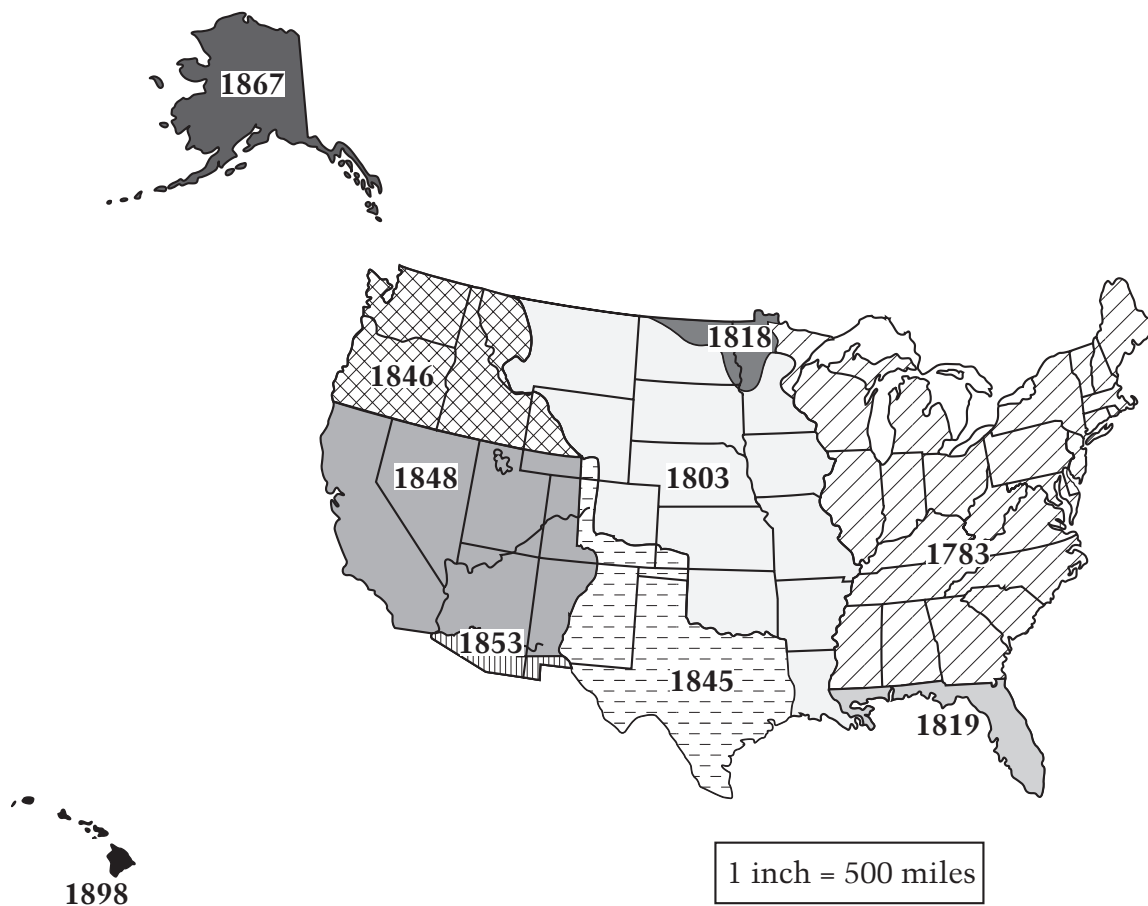
## Sample U.S. History Questions

### Grade 4

1. Most people in the southern colonies made their living by
  - Ⓐ iron mining
  - Ⓑ fishing
  - farming
  - Ⓓ shipbuilding
2. The document that contains the basic rules used to run the United States government is
  - Ⓐ the Declaration of Independence
  - Ⓑ Magna Carta
  - Ⓒ the Mayflower Compact
  - the Constitution

Questions 3–4 are based on the map below.

#### TERRITORIAL EXPANSION OF THE UNITED STATES



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3. Which area became part of the United States last?

- ☒ A Hawaii
- ☐ B Texas
- ☐ C Oregon
- ☐ D Alaska

4. Write the name of the state or area where you live in the space below.

State or Area: Virginia

In the space below, write one important fact about the way your state or area became part of the United States.

It was one of the 13 colonies.

5. Why were most early sawmills and flour mills located on rivers and streams?

- ☐ A Water was needed to cool hot machinery.
- ☒ B Waterwheels powered the cutting and grinding machines.
- ☐ C People thought it was safer to live near rivers.
- ☐ D It was easiest to expand the mills if they were near rivers.

6. In 1492, when Christopher Columbus first landed in the Americas, he thought he was in

- ☐ A Spain
- ☒ B the East Indies
- ☐ C the Hawaiian Islands
- ☐ D Italy



## Student Background Questionnaire

### General Directions for Grade 4

In the next two sections, you will be asked questions about yourself and your education. We will read the first section together. To answer these questions, fill in the oval beside the answer that is true for you. For example, fill in the oval beside your answer to this question:

How many movies did you see last month on television and in movie theaters?

- ☐ Ⓐ None
- ☐ Ⓑ 1 to 5
- ☐ Ⓒ 6 to 10
- ☐ Ⓓ More than 10

You should have filled in the oval beside the answer that best tells how many movies you saw last month on television and in movie theaters. On questions like this, be sure to make your answer mark clear and dark in the oval. If you make a mistake or want to change your answer, be sure to completely erase any unwanted marks.

You will be told when it is time to begin and end each section.

Do not go past the  sign at the end of each section until you are told to do so.

If you finish before time is called, go back and check your work on that section only. Use your time carefully. Do as much as you can in each section.





## Student Background Questionnaire

In this section, please tell us about yourself and your family. The section has 11 questions. Mark your answers in your booklet.

VB331330

1. Are you Hispanic or Latino? Fill in **one or more ovals**.

- ☐ Ⓐ No, I am not Hispanic or Latino.
- ☐ Ⓑ Yes, I am Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano.
- ☐ Ⓒ Yes, I am Puerto Rican or Puerto Rican American.
- ☐ Ⓓ Yes, I am Cuban or Cuban American.
- ☐ Ⓔ Yes, I am from some other Hispanic or Latino background.

VB331331

2. Which of the following best describes you? Fill in **one or more ovals**.

- ☐ Ⓐ White
- ☐ Ⓑ Black or African American
- ☐ Ⓒ Asian
- ☐ Ⓓ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Ⓔ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

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For the rest of the questions in this section, fill in only **one** oval for each question.

VB331333

3. Does your family get a newspaper at least four times a week?

☐ A Yes  
☐ B No  
☐ C I don't know.

VB331334

4. Does your family get any magazines regularly?

☐ A Yes  
☐ B No  
☐ C I don't know.

VB331335

5. About how many books are there in your home?

☐ A Few (0–10)  
☐ B Enough to fill one shelf (11–25)  
☐ C Enough to fill one bookcase (26–100)  
☐ D Enough to fill several bookcases (more than 100)

VB331336

6. Is there a computer at home that you use?

☐ A Yes  
☐ B No

VB331337

7. Is there an encyclopedia in your home? It could be a set of books, or it could be on the computer.

☐ A Yes  
☐ B No  
☐ C I don't know.

TB001101

8. About how many pages a day do you have to read in school and for homework?

☐ A 5 or fewer  
☐ B 6–10  
☐ C 11–15  
☐ D 16–20  
☐ E More than 20

VB331339

9. How often do you talk about things you have studied in school with someone in your family?

☐ A Never or hardly ever  
☐ B Once every few weeks  
☐ C About once a week  
☐ D Two or three times a week  
☐ E Every day

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VB331447

10. How many days were you absent from school in the last month?

- Ⓐ None
- Ⓑ 1 or 2 days
- Ⓒ 3 or 4 days
- Ⓓ 5 to 10 days
- Ⓔ More than 10 days

VB331451

11. How often do people in your home talk to each other in a language other than English?

- Ⓐ Never
- Ⓑ Once in a while
- Ⓒ About half of the time
- Ⓓ All or most of the time



# Student Background Questionnaire

## Civics—Grade 4

This section has 9 questions. Mark your answers in your booklet. Fill in only **one** oval for each question.

VB594977

1. How often do you study social studies in school?

- ☐ Ⓐ Never or hardly ever
- ☐ Ⓑ Once or twice a month
- ☐ Ⓒ Once or twice a week
- ☐ Ⓓ Almost every day

ID100192

2. During this school year, have you studied any of the following topics? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Yes	No	I don't know
a. How our government works	<input type="radio"/> Ⓐ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓑ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓒ
b. Rules and laws of our government	<input type="radio"/> Ⓐ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓑ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓒ
c. Elections and voting	<input type="radio"/> Ⓐ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓑ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓒ
d. The President and leaders of our country	<input type="radio"/> Ⓐ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓑ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓒ
e. Your community	<input type="radio"/> Ⓐ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓑ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓒ
f. Rights and responsibilities of citizens	<input type="radio"/> Ⓐ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓑ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓒ
g. How people try to solve disagreements	<input type="radio"/> Ⓐ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓑ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓒ

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ID100201

3. Do you do any of the following when you study social studies? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Yes	No	I don't know
a. Read from your textbook	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C
b. Memorize material you have read	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C
c. Read extra material not in your textbook (such as newspapers, magazines, maps, charts, or cartoons)	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C
d. Fill out worksheets	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C
e. Write reports	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C
f. Discuss current events	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C
g. Watch television shows, videos, or filmstrips in class	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C
h. Discuss television shows, videos, or filmstrips	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C
i. Take part in debates or panel discussions	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C
j. Take part in role-playing, mock trials, or dramas	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C
k. Write a letter to give your opinion or help solve a community problem	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C
l. Have visits from people in your community to learn about important events and ideas	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C

VB594978

4. This year in school, how often have you been asked to write long answers to questions or assignments that involved social studies?

- ☐ A Never
- ☐ B Once or twice this year
- ☐ C Once or twice a month
- ☐ D At least once a week

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VB594979

5. How often do you use computers at school for social studies?

- Ⓐ Never or hardly ever
- Ⓑ Once every few weeks
- Ⓒ About once a week
- Ⓓ Two or three times a week
- Ⓔ Every day

VB594980

6. When you study social studies, do you do research projects about social studies topics using a CD or the Internet? Include things you do in class and things you do for homework assignments.

- Ⓐ Yes
- Ⓑ No

VB595182

7. How hard was this test compared to most other tests you have taken this year in school?

- Ⓐ Easier than other tests
- Ⓑ About as hard as other tests
- Ⓒ Harder than other tests
- Ⓓ Much harder than other tests

VC034559

8. How hard did you try on this test compared to how hard you tried on most other tests you have taken this year in school?

- Ⓐ Not as hard as on other tests
- Ⓑ About as hard as on other tests
- Ⓒ Harder than on other tests
- Ⓓ Much harder than on other tests

VB595184

9. How important was it to you to do well on this test?

- Ⓐ Not very important
- Ⓑ Somewhat important
- Ⓒ Important
- Ⓓ Very important



# Student Background Questionnaire

## U.S. History—Grade 4

This section has 9 questions. Mark your answers in your booklet. Fill in only **one** oval for each question.

VB594977

1. How often do you study social studies in school?

- ☐ Ⓐ Never or hardly ever
- ☐ Ⓑ Once or twice a month
- ☐ Ⓒ Once or twice a week
- ☐ Ⓓ Almost every day

VB345589

2. Have you ever studied the history of the United States in school?

- ☐ Ⓐ Yes
- ☐ Ⓑ No

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VB598095

3. When you study history or social studies in school, how often do you do each of the following? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Never	A few times a year	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	About every day
a. Read material from a textbook	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E
b. Read extra material not in the regular textbook (e.g., biographies or historical stories)	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E
c. Use letters, diaries, or essays written by historical people	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E
d. Discuss the material studied	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E
e. Write short answers (a paragraph or less) to questions	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E
f. Write a report	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E
g. Work on a group project	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E
h. Give a report on the topic being studied	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E
i. Watch movies, videos, or filmstrips	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E
j. Take a test or quiz	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E
k. Go on field trips or have outside speakers	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E
l. Schoolwork in the library	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E

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VB598168

4. This year in school, how often have you been asked to write long answers to questions or assignments for history or social studies?

☐ Ⓐ Never

☐ Ⓑ Once or twice this year

☐ Ⓒ Once or twice a month

☐ Ⓓ At least once a week

VB598169

5. How often do you use computers at school for history or social studies?

☐ Ⓐ Never or hardly ever

☐ Ⓑ Once every few weeks

☐ Ⓒ About once a week

☐ Ⓓ Two or three times a week

☐ Ⓔ Every day

VB598170

6. When you study history or social studies, do you do research projects about history or social studies topics using a CD or the Internet? Include things you do in class and things you do for homework assignments.

☐ Ⓐ Yes

☐ Ⓑ No

VB595182

7. How hard was this test compared to most other tests you have taken this year in school?

☐ Ⓐ Easier than other tests

☐ Ⓑ About as hard as other tests

☐ Ⓒ Harder than other tests

☐ Ⓓ Much harder than other tests

VC034559

8. How hard did you try on this test compared to how hard you tried on most other tests you have taken this year in school?

☐ Ⓐ Not as hard as on other tests

☐ Ⓑ About as hard as on other tests

☐ Ⓒ Harder than on other tests

☐ Ⓓ Much harder than on other tests

VB595184

9. How important was it to you to do well on this test?

☐ Ⓐ Not very important

☐ Ⓑ Somewhat important

☐ Ⓒ Important

☐ Ⓓ Very important

